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607 good and bad, and the young men speak and laugh much with the wife of their elder brother; no one takes any notice of this.

603 Old men and their wives love their grandchildren very much; they carry them on their 854 hips, they fondle them, and the wives of brothers also, if they live in peace with each other, carry the children of them all on their hips and fondle them, and when they have 855 fever or are ill, they also nurse each other.

b. Separation of brothers.

428 When the grandchildren become very numerous, or when they do not live in harmony in the house together, the parents separate them. In connexion with the village headman and the village council the father divides the agricultural and other land, the cattle, big and small, all in equal parts, and gives it to them, and he keeps for himself one part, and the son with whom the old couple stays, with him their part will stay. When the parents lose all strength, the sons have to support them, because at the time when the children were unable to support themselves the parents supported them with great hardship. Daughters do not get any share. Generally, at the time when they are married, they give them each one calf. And at the time of separation, if they are spinsters, they give them a calf. And sons, who at the time of separation are bachelors, get a double share of the cattle, one share being for their marriage. The pieces of cattle that daughters-in-law have got from their father and brothers, and from their father-in-law at the time of marriage, these are not divided; but the cattle, that sons-in-law get from their father-in-law at the time of marriage, these are divided.

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his courtyard after the midday meal used to make sure of rising at the right time by telling his children to waken him when the shadows had reached a certain spot.

During the night the time is indicated not only by the position of the moon but also by the stars, and particularly by reference to the constellation Pleiades. There are at least two myths relating to the sun and the moon. In the one the sun is male and the moon female, while the stars are their children. The absence of the stars from the sky in daytime is explained by a story that they made a pact to eat their children. The sun carried out the bargain and so there are no stars visible by daylight, but the moon evaded her promise and so some of the children survived. The other version says that both the sun and the moon are male; they became related to each other by marrying each other's sisters. Only a few of the stars and constellations are named. The Pleiades have the same name as one of the clans; the Milky Way is known as the "cow track", and the Great Bear is the "old woman's bed".

Between the harvest and the Spring festival, a period which corresponds with the cold weather, the villages present a deserted appearance, due to the annual migration to the east for work in the harvest fields of the Ganges delta. This seasonal migration, dictated by economic necessity, plays an important part in the life of the area. Farther to the north many Santals work in the coal-mines round Asansol, while to the south labour is drawn to the great steel town of Tatanagar. In this area migration to industrial centres is rare; the Santals regard the conditions in industrial towns as highly dangerous to health, and they affirm that nothing will induce them to go there. The same reason, however, does not prevent them from leaving their own villages in a non-malarious tract of country for the malarious rice-growing areas farther east, in consequence of which the money earned is often more than spent in the expenses of protracted illness and long periods of idleness. Each village organizes its own party of migrants, who go to work for the same masters year after year. The wages they receive are more than double what is paid in their own locality, and so they earn the money required to pay rent, to meet social expenditure for marriages, and to pay off old debts. The homes are left in charge of the aged, and some of the children are left behind. The villages are denuded of able-bodied men and women, apart from a few who do not need to go. Family parties travel together, babies and very young children being carried

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by their parents. It is no uncommon sight to see a man striding along the road with a carrying pole across his shoulders; in the basket slung from one end he carries some of the family cooking utensils, while the youngest member of the family sits confidently in a basket at the other end. The immediate economic advantage of this annual migration, without which they might be forced to leave their present homes with dire consequences for their tribal stability, is secured at a heavy price. In addition to the toll on their health, tribal sanctions are loosened away from the village. Offenders against the tribal law, runaway brides, women accused of witchcraft, and many others who do not wish to submit to discipline can find a refuge away from their homes, and each year the number of those who elect to stay "east" is growing.

The older generation regard the yearly exodus as the prime cause of moral laxity because it flouts an old taboo. Formerly no Santal was supposed to cross the Damodar river, which forms the northern and eastern boundary of the Bankura district. When at first men were drawn away to work over the river the women were not allowed to accompany them. The reason given for this prohibition was that by crossing the river they would bring misfortune on themselves and their villages. The underlying causes may be connected in part with the fact that the tribal gods are forest gods and could not protect them on the other side of the river, where there are no forests; and partly linked with the fact that the Damodar has an important place in their customs for disposing of the dead.[1] Whatever they be, the old taboo is now ignored.

During the last few days of *Pus* (mid-January) and at each month's end till the Spring festival, parties of men, women and children can be seen returning along the roads in single file, the women always in front. They are bent on reaching their own villages before the festivities which mark the turn of the month. The old people watch for their return and the relieving of their responsibilities. They enjoy greater leisure and may be seen more often squatting on the narrow ledges that surround the houses, sunning themselves. As men and women return from the east they find employment chiefly in felling trees and in carting both wood and leaves to the railway. For many years the traditional attitude of the Santal to the forest has been to make clearings and begin cultivation. The forests of the area are privately owned by the landlords, and they are exploited for their timber.

[1] See Chapter 12, p. 155.